SUPERMAN • BATMAN

What a Way to Go!

The bad news is that *Jeph Loeb* is definitely leaving ***Superman/Batman***—the book he helped launch back in 2003—after his final story arc wraps up in the twenty-fifth issue of that best-selling title. The good news? Loeb is giving ***Superman/Batman*** fans not one but two comic book events as a farewell gift.

First up is ***Superman/Batman #19***, a standalone story illustrated by *Ian Churchill & Norm Rapmund*, featuring the return of Supergirl, the character that Loeb and *Michael Turner* introduced back in #s 8-13. "It's best to think of ***Superman/Batman #19*** as ***Supergirl #0***," Loeb told ***CSN***. "This issue will explain where she's been since the end of 'The Girl From Krypton' arc and what she's been up to. What's fun about starting up in ***Superman/Batman*** is that we can continue the themes of trust and control into this single standalone story.

"And Ian's artwork is simply stunning. I've known him for years. We did a long run on ***Cable*** back in the day and then at Awesome, I wrote his creation ***The Coven***. Given all that, this is his best work to date. It has me totally stoked for the series."

There's no doubt that Loeb is excited about the prospect of launching ***Supergirl*** this summer. "As with most things that happen to me in comics, it's all about timing. *Dan DiDio* and *Eddie Berganza* were thinking about a ***Supergirl*** series after the stunning success of her debut. Meanwhile, I had decided I was leaving ***Superman/Batman*** at #25, and they knew I'd want another book and a new challenge to pick up that slot. I love the character and wanted to get her feet on solid ground for the series, but only if we had the right artist. Then, along came Ian who had been away for a year traveling the world.

"***Supergirl*** has given him a brand new kind of energy to his work. He's taken a bit of *Jim Lee*, a bit of *Mike Turner*, a lot of Ian, and created something new. The best example I can think of is how *Ethan Van Sciver* exploded off of ***Green Lantern Rebirth***, even though he'd been around and most folks new his work. Ethan found a new level and it shows; Ian brings that same game."

What's the focus of this standalone tale? "Like with an ***Superman/Batman*** story, the focus is going to be a mix of character and big ol' action. Basically, Supergirl is out there doing her thing, unaware that Batman and Superman have been keeping tabs on her. When she becomes aware of this... well, it's not pretty. But, the twist is that she discovers *someone else* is spying on her at the same time. And without giving too much away, this is where we tie in, ever so slightly, to ***Identity Crisis***. But, keep that a secret!" Loeb said with a laugh.

Supergirl is a character who obviously clicked; what does Loeb see as the secret to her success—and what makes the Kara Zor-El Supergirl so enduring? "We have to see if she *is* enduring," Loeb said. "It's only been six issues!... Having said that, a good idea is a good idea, and Supergirl is a great one. There should *always* be a Supergirl—and even when everything was rebooted in 1986—nearly twenty years ago!—it wasn't long before they realized they *needed* the character. The fact that she was an ectoplasmic being from another reality who bonded with angel ... that just makes my head hurt! And *no*, that's not a slam on anyone who worked on that character—there is no bigger fan of *Peter David's* work than me, in particular with her. Say what you will, that conception lasted eighty issues and that's to be respected.

"But, at the end of the day, the public perception, and my childhood memories are of Kara as a girl who is Superman's cousin and came from Krypton. It's clean, it's simple and it's readily identifiable. Hopefully, that's what makes her click.

"I have to warn you, though. This isn't the same sweet girl from the 1950's who looked up at Superman with dreamy eyes and hoped someday to grow up to be like him. To begin with, Kara finds herself much more drawn to Wonder Woman as a role model—strong, independent and fierce.

"It's like what I did with Krypto. Anyone who says 'It's a dog with a cape and that's stupid' hasn't been reading the book. Krypto isn't the character from forty years ago, he doesn't think in thought balloons, he doesn't even listen! It's a *dog* with Superman's powers! If he wants to barbecue a cat, there's not a lot anybody can do about it. That's, why when he ripped out Mongul's throat when Mongul was threatening Lois back in ***Superman #170***, you got to see the potential danger of having this beast around.

"Look, *something* made that icon stick around all these decades and that's a cool factor you can't deny. Supergirl is the same thing—a hot young teenager with Superman's powers trying to make sense of it all... that's a great concept."

Just two weeks after that issue reaches comic shops, Loeb is back to kick off his farewell story arc—an arc that reunites him with artists *Ed McGuinness & Dexter Vines*, the same artistic duo who joined him for the launch of the title. This story arc introduces a new challenge for Superman and Batman as they confront the Maximums, a superteam who is convinced that the World's Finest Duo must be brought to justice. But who are the Maximums, and how closely do they resemble the Authority or the Ultimates? "The Maximums are a government-sponsored team of mighty heroes who handle things differently than the JLA. They aren't the Authority because the Authority answers only to themselves. I think folks will *marvel* at their uniqueness in the DCU," Loeb said wryly.

So exactly why are the Maximums so unhappy with Superman and Batman, and what do they intend to do about it? "I can't tell you that! That's the *story*!" Loeb protested. "What I *can* tell you is that, like all the ***Superman/Batman*** arcs, it starts in one direction and will wind up someplace else. Going all the way back to the first issue—that began with a fight with Metallo and by the end, it was the downfall of Lex Luthor as President. Along the way, it's a wild ride and we're having a blast doing it!"

Speaking of the downfall of Lex Luthor... There have been several plot threads involving Luthor and others that Loeb has introduced during the run of this series; is he planning to pick up on any of those loose threads in his farewell saga? "Umm... yes," Loeb replied. "One of the joys of doing ***Superman/Batman*** has been telling separate arcs, with sensationally talented artists, but leaving bits and pieces of unanswered questions along the way. Some of them *have* been answered – like the meteor from #s 1-6 became the inciting incident that started the Supergirl arc. Hopefully, by the time #25 is done, all of those threads will be tied off—or maybe not!

"I'm a big believer that a writer should leave some toys out of the box so other people can come and pick them up. I realize there are some folks who wanted *all* the answers at the end of 'Hush,' but comics are a serialized form. You tie it all up in a neat little bow, and you might as well cancel the book. I'll never understand the criticism about how *Brad Meltzer* left stuff open in ***Identity Crisis;*** that was fantastic on his part to leave story points for the DCU to pick up and use... like Captain Boomerang. Go pick up ***The Flash*** and see what *Geoff Johns* is doing with that thread. It's great stuff!"

Will the Maximums have anything in common with the Elite, the Authority-esque team that Superman confronted back in ***Action #775*** before they metamorphosed into ***Justice League Elite*** last year? "Not really," Loeb said. "The Elite—who I think *Joe Kelly* has done an incredible job with and ***Action Comics #775*** is pretty much regarded as a high water mark for that book—were to tell a very important morality play. It really was about The Authority and how they run the game. And, in it's own not-so-subtle way, commented on where the comic book industry was headed at the time.

"The Maximums take a similar approach in that we'll see them as archetypes but when this story is over, we'll see how integral Batman and Superman are to not only our Universe, but to all the Universes. It spins out of what is happening in 'Absolute Power' [Loeb's story arc that runs through ***Superman/Batman #s 14-18]*** which—without giving away the ending—seems to be reaching a conclusion where no matter what you do, history will cling tightly to her truths. Superman and Batman have to be who they are. Now, in this last storyline that I'm doing, we'll see how that impacts everyone who wears a mask, so to speak."

Does Loeb's reunion with Mcguinness and Vines seem like the completion of a cycle, since the two arcs that the trio have done together serve as bookends for Loeb's tenure on the series? "That was the plan from the beginning. Ed's been my partner for nearly five years now. Our friendship dates back further than that. He did first gig at Marvel with me on ***Wolverine '96*** and he's been kicking a$$ ever since. Our ***Superman*** run (#151-183) was a riot and launching this book with him to such success makes me very happy and the added bonus of *Dexter Vines* has made it all very sweet."

Now that he's reducing his workload by one monthly title—although he's also taking on a new monthly with the debut of Supergirl this summer—what else is Loeb adding to his schedule comics-wise? "I have a few surprises in store—I mean, really *wow* stuff, but I think you know me well enough by now that I don't like talking about a new project while I'm trying to get folks interested in something in the here and now. I've got ***Superman/Batman*** through to #25, which is most of the rest of the year. During the summer—I don't have a hard date—we'll launch ***Supergirl***. And following the completion of ***Catwoman: When In Rome***, *Tim Sale* and I have our next project lined up—and it's fairly huge.

"We've been talking about it for a few years with DC and again, it's about timing. *Now* is the time. It will feature the two characters that Tim is known best for drawing at DC ... and you can pretty much figure it out from there! Yes, it's an Ambush Bug and Matter Eater Lad painted hardcover graphic novel!" Loeb said with a laugh.

As he nears the end of the run, is Loeb proud of what he's accomplished with ***Superman/Batman***? After all, he gave Superman a top-selling title before *Brian Azzarello & Jim Lee* revamped the flagship book, he kept Batman at the top of his game ... those are some pretty amazing things! "I never take for granted the good fortune that I have had," Loeb said. "Both DC and Marvel have been very good to me, allowing a lot of rope to hang myself with and for the moment, I've managed to miss the noose. I'm a fan. I go to the comic book store every Wednesday (or Friday after Sushi!) and buy my books. I buy things I know I'm getting from DC and Marvel but I can't wait for those to arrive. I need my comics *now*! I try to take that excitement that I get from reading *Geoff Johns, Mark Millar, Joss Whedon, Brad Meltzer,* and a ton of other guys and bring it to my page. I really appreciate the kind words, not only from you, but from the fans and retailers. This is the best job in the world."

Superman/Batman #19, a $2.99 book, is scheduled for April 13th release; ***Superman/Batman #20*** follows two weeks later.

BY CLIFF BIGGERS

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by ***Comic Shop News*** in cooperation with *Matt Brady* and *newsarama.com*

Yoshida Passes

Bill Yoshida, Archie Comics' premier letterer who had worked for the company since 1965, died in mid-February. Yoshida lettered thousands of stories for Archie in a career that spanned four decades; during this time, he lettered more than 150,000 pages of comics material. Yoshida was nominated for a Will Eisner Award for Best Lettering in 1996 and 1999.

McDaniel Joins Robin's Flock

Now that ***Richard Dragon*** is wrapping up its run and ***Nightwing: Year One*** is coming to an end, *Scott McDaniel* has some room in his schedule for another series—but he's not venturing into unfamiliar territory. McDaniel is trading in one Batman sidekick for another as he signs on to illustrate the Boy Wonder's adventures as of ***Robin #139***.

McDaniel told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady* how the job came about. "I was in the right place at the right time! I was nearing the end of my work on both the ***Nightwing: Year One*** project and the project when I began to look around for the next place to 'hang my hat.' I've enjoyed working with editor *Michael Wright* for years now, and I offered my services to him. He offered me ***Robin***, and I eagerly accepted!

Michael is the connection between these three projects for me, although an editorial reorganization placed the ***Nightwing Year One*** project with editor *Nachie Castro* just before I began working on it."

McDaniel is quite pleased to be working on another member of the Batman family of books. "I love this group of characters for several reasons. First, I could be Batman, Nightwing or Robin, given enough dedication—and money. In fact, when I was a boy, I went after *Burt Ward's* job as Robin! I sent in a letter to the local TV station making my case for why I would make a better Robin than Burt. I even promised that I would remove my glasses before doing the fight scenes. I never heard back from them. I don't think Burt lost any sleep over my bid.

"Next, you can't get any more interesting environments than you find in the Bat universe. The places exist and have a tangible personality that you can't often get with more fictional and fantastic locations. Almost everyone has walked down a dark, wet, trash-strewn alley and felt the hairs stand up on the back of their neck. I don't know what it's like to walk down a hallway made of crystal and holograms. When you render a location, it carries just as much (sometimes much more) personality than the living characters in it, and for me, that is a real bonus.

"You can't leave out the first-rate rogues gallery. Because the heroes have human limitations, you can find many interesting ways to challenge them, and boy do they get challenged! You can come at them psychologically, emotionally, and physically, and know that they may not overcome each challenge!

"Finally, this group of characters offers a fun dichotomy they can be colorful and exaggerated while immersed in a dark and grounded reality. Robin is the perfect example. He's a visually colorful figure that suddenly becomes a bit spooky when dropped into the darkness. That great contrast offers lots of opportunity to play creatively. As an artist and fan, there is a lot to love about this group of characters.

When McDaniel was working on ***Nightwing***, he described his visual interpretation of the character as "Jackie Chan on paper." What's his take on ***Robin***? "That's the question I'm still working to answer! Nightwing, for me, was Jackie Chan with a gymnast's physique. He is the circus acrobat who does everything in elegant, grandiose style. Editor *Scott Peterson* would always say that he would tie his shoe by simply stretching into a near vertical split, his foot on a nearby wall, shoulder high, instead of sitting down or kneeling down to do it. Everything is physical for Dick, and he does it with ease and grace.

"Batman, for me, was former heavyweight boxing champion Evander Holyfield to me. Evander impressed me with his regal visual appearance, standing tall, head up high when relaxed, then athletic—not graceful, but balanced and strong—when fighting. He wasn't thin like a gymnast like Nightwing, or stocky like other heavyweights, like Mike Tyson, but having that more classical, Roman physique. Batman doesn't run or jump or fight like Nightwing. He doesn't use exaggerated movement. His moves are controlled and purposeful.

"Robin, for me, is still under development. I have an idea that would distinguish him from Nightwing and Batman in his kinetics, and we'll see how it plays out. It does take a little while to find the rhythm of a character, but I think I have an approach that will work well."

Robin experienced the traumatic loss of his father in ***Identity Crisis;*** will that ordeal have an effect on Robin's character, forcing him to grow up quickly? "Tim is still a young man, and he'll still have those young man issues to deal with, but like most other young men in our society, they have to face more mature challenges at younger and younger ages. And the positive for stories with more kid-like qualities, they often feature more adventure, and I love adventure in comics."

McDaniel is looking forward to working with writer *Bill Willingham*. "Bill is an artist himself, so he understands what he is demanding of the artist. He leaves plenty of room to stretch out and play! His run on ***Robin*** so far has shown a terrific mix of character development and action, and I'm confident that balance will continue! What Bill has been doing seems a good fit for me, and it's my hope that he won't have to change how he writes just to accommodate my particular nuances. It's my job to accommodate the story! The bottom line is that both Bill and I will work to deliver a Robin that is a great read and a fun ride!

"What's really exciting for me is the chance to come back to doing more youthful art. The stories on ***Nightwing*** felt young and fresh and fun, and that influenced my art in those directions. The ***Batman*** stories during my run were serious-minded crime-drama, and that influenced my art by subduing the exaggerated elements. The stories in ***Richard Dragon*** are very dark and brutal, and that influenced my art to become darker and sharper/harder in angle and force. Now, on ***Robin***, I expect the stories to contain an interesting mix of youthfulness, seriousness, darkness and adventure, and it will be fun to discover how these stories will inform my art in new ways."

Robin #139, the first McDaniel issue, is scheduled for June release.

Alias Keeps Living in the Past

A few weeks ago, ***CSN*** told you about Alias Comics' plans to offer four new series (***Deal With the Devil, Elsinore, Killer Stunts Inc.,*** and ***Lethal Instinct***) at a special promotional price of 75¢ for their first issues—the price that comics sold for twenty years ago,. Now Alias has confirmed that they will continue their "twenty-year-rollback" pricing promotion this summer as they unveil four more 75¢ first issues—***XIII, Devil's Keeper, Imperial Dragons,*** and ***Opposite Forces***. "We're not the only ones doing this, but we like to think that our success has influenced some of the other publishers to try it as well," *Mike S. Miller*, Executive Director of Alias Comics, said. "It's turning into a trend, and we're happy to be at the front of it. When we announced our twenty-year rollback back in December, it was met with a lot of praise from retailers and readers alike. We see this promotion as a great way to get readers hooked into each series from the first issue, and we hope that they'll enjoy each of our titles when they launch in April."

I Think They're Turning Japanese, I Really Think So...

Last year, Archie Comics met with great success when they enlisted *Tania del Rio* to manga-fy ***Sabrina***—so this year, they're doing the same thing with another established, Josie and the Pussycats. In June, Archie will present the first in a series of manga-style Josie stories written by del Rio, pencilled by *Chris Lie*, and inked by *Andrew Pepoy*.

The manga-style stories will appear in various Archie family books, beginning with ***Tales from Riverdale Digest #3,*** which will include the short story "Opening Act," in which the group searches for a regular opening act for their concerts. The next manga-style appearance can be found in ***Sabrina the Teenage Witch #68;*** "It's in the Cards" finds the band hired to play at the birthday party of a playing card mogul's eight-year-old daughter.

That's Life...

Comic books are filled with stories of phenomenal heroes fighting unbelievable menaces in fantastic locales—but Hyperion Books is looking to bring the medium back to Earth with their new series of graphic novels that tell the stories of real-world people who have made their mark on history.

Next year, the company will offer the first two in a series of graphic biographies produced for Hyperion Books for Children by The Center for Cartoon Studies. The first two biographies in this series will be ***Houdini,*** written by *Jason Lutes* & *James Sturm* and illustrated by *Nick Bertozzi*, spotlighting the world's most famous escape artist whose illusions riveted the country during the early 19th century; and ***Satchel Paige***, written by *James Sturm*, about the legendary ballplayer whose great pitching talent spanned five decades beginning in the era of the Negro Leagues. Both biographies are slated to release in fall 2006.

"When I saw the work of *James Sturm* and *Jason Lutes* at Comic-Con this year I wanted to find a way to bring their sense of aesthetics and of American social history to young readers," said *Brenda Bowen*, vice president and editor-in-chief of Hyperion Books for Children. "We're always on the lookout for new creative content to expand our growing graphic publishing program; and graphic biographies by critically-acclaimed artists and writers are the perfect way to complement the program."

"Teachers now recognize and look to comics as a tool for learning. These biographies will open an exciting window into American history," *James Sturm*, director of The Center for Cartoon Studies and award-winning creator of ***The Golem's Mighty Swing***, said. "This is also a tremendous opportunity for students planning to attend CCS to learn first-hand how graphic novels are produced. I'm looking forward to working with Hyperion Books for Children, an imprint known for producing

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quality books for young readers"

The graphic biographies will focus on figures from history whom children find both interesting and entertaining. At eighty to ninety-six pages each, the books will tell an exciting chapter of the subject's life in graphic form along with ten pages of background material expanding on the political and social history of the period. After the debut of ***Houdini*** and ***Satchel Paige***, Hyperion Books for Children will release two new graphic biographies each year.

CSN Celebrates FCBD

To help celebrate Free Comic Book Day 2005, ***Comic Shop News #933*** will be a special issue. Titled the ***CSN 2005 FCBD Reader's Guide***, ***CSN #933*** will be a special issue for all those Free Comic Book Day visitors that informs them about the amazing selection of entertainment the comics field has to offer! The ***CSN 2005 FCBD Reader's Guide*** highlights some of the best reading on the comic shop racks. It will spotlight comics, manga, graphic novels, collected editions and the other cool merchandise that is unique to comic shops. ***CSN #933*** will be a stand-alone issue will be in shops Wednesday, May 4, 2005. It is solicited as ***CSN #933*** in the March ***Previews***.

Coleite & Kirkham Join V.I.C.E. Squad

Hunter-Killer has made readers aware that the Top Cow Universe is a dangerous place... but we can all take relief in the fact that there's a new security agency helping the Hunter-Killer teams to keep the world a bit safer.

Meet the Violent Incident Control Enforcement... better known as V.I.C.E. Their job is to combat terrorism and to protect the US from threats to national security. You'll get a chance to see them in action this summer when writer *Aron Coleite* and artist *Tyler Kirkham* launch ***V.I.C.E.*** in their own series.

While *Mark Waid & Marc Silvestri's* ***Hunter-Killer*** is a buddy book, ***V.I.C.E.*** is about "serious moral failings."

"I can't think of anything that describes that more than our own government," Coleite told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Benjamin Ong Pang Kean*. "I mean, the communication breakdown between our intelligence communities is a colossal failure. So, ***V.I.C.E.*** is a book about the strike force that is the link between FBI, CIA, DEA, etc.

"The thing is, in order to combat the serious bad-asses that threaten the American way of life—it's going to take agents that aren't afraid of things like collateral damage, bribes, prisoner torture or executions if they're needed to get results. Get it? Vice.

"If I would make a comparison, ***V.I.C.E.*** is the kid brother to ***Hunter-Killer***. The characters are much less powerful, and their actions are very much in the public eye. Federal agents get a power boost to take on a new wave of terrorism. I'd love to see ***V.I.C.E.*** as a cartoon on Adult Swim; it'd make a really great video game, too."

It's no surprise that Coleite thinks of television possibilities for the series, since that's the field where he's done most of his work to date, including episodes of ***Crossing Jordan***. His main background in comics is collecting. "I've been a fan forever. When the chance came to work in comics, I jumped on it.

"I started at Top Cow with a book called ***The Proximity Effect***. In addition to ***V.I.C.E.***, I'm also doing another Top Cow book called ***The Covenant***. I really love the stuff Top Cow's been doing and they responded to my work as well. They were looking for someone to do a cape-style crime book and thought I would be a good fit. They had the title – ***V.I.C.E.*** – and knew they wanted it to be about a federal group that had to take on some very serious missions.

"They wanted it to come out of the Waid/Silvestri ***Hunter-Killer*** universe. It's a dream even thinking that I could do something spun-off from those two guys. I mean, their work is consistently amazing.

"When I got started, the Senate committee hearings about 911 intelligence reports were coming out, and there was talk of a National Information director. I really felt disillusioned and that started to come through in my pitches to Hawkins."

While on the surface, ***V.I.C.E.*** is about human corruption, there's also the other side of that coin—human redemption. "Beck, the youngest member of the team, is a telekinetic. But Beck barely has enough power to move his own bowels. Beck's power manifested when he was sixteen—and he followed the old saying, 'With great power, comes great opportunity!' Beck goes on a crime spree and inadvertently kills an innocent bystander. Beck is sentenced to death, but because of his TK field, they can't kill him. So Beck is thrown onto this strike team, where he hopes to find redemption. But it's going to be difficult for him in this den of thieves.

"Other members of ***V.I.C.E.*** include Lane Milan, aka India, who was a disturbed child. A cocktail of Prozac, Ritalin and dopamine were the only things to keep her Bi-polar disorder in check. Lane's parents had high hopes – ballerina, equestrian and scholar. But Lane had other thoughts – krav-maga, sharp shooting and psychology. The FBI recruited Lane when she was only sixteen. During her physical, the doctors discovered that Lane's Ferrokinetic—a metal manipulator. They theorized Lane's powers were derived from the mood altering drugs she's become addicted to. Unfortunately, Lane can only control Indium (hence her codename) – a very rare metal. The Government has mined enough metal for three bullets. That's it. But that's enough. She can use them to pick off targets, spread it out to make a bulletproof shield, or use them as claws. If Lane stops taking her mood stabilizers, she will not only descend into manic depression – but also risk losing her powers.

"SWAT – Benjamin Adams - is a boy scout, quarterback, field leader and telepath. He's a heaping slice of apple pie. Courageous under fire. Never sweats. Confident. Handsome. And like all leaders—completely manipulative. Ben not only coordinates the CRU agents in a telepathic symphony of precision but has sunk his psychic hooks into a squad of 10 S.W.A.T. officers. The key to leadership is obedience. In the field, the S.W.A.T. team obeys Ben's orders. The perfect soldiers. The perfect team. The problem is Ben cannot remove his psychic hooks, they're embedded—the bond is permanent. Ben is kept extremely busy with missions, paperwork and training. He's made no time for a social life. He doesn't need to. Ben lives vicariously through his S.W.A.T. members. The family man with wife and kids. The sadist. The drug addict. The sports fanatic. Ben doesn't need a life—he has ten."

Coleite's artistic partner on ***V.I.C.E.*** is *Tyler Kirkham*, who has worked on such Top Cow projects as ***StrykeForce*** and ***Darkness/Superman*** as well as ***The Gift***. "Tyler is amazing... I've been trying to write to his strengths—bold, amazing action sequences and fantastic imagery."

V.I.C.E. is slated to debut in a summer preview before joining the Top Cow lineup as an ongoing series in November.

Ins & Outs

In! A new creative team for *Jim Valentino's* ***ShadowHawk***. "We have a brand new ongoing series coming in May," Valentino told ***Comic Shop Newsarama***. "It's written by *Jim Keplinger*, drawn by *Carlos Rodriguez*, inked by *Albert Puig*, colored by *Jose Rio*, edited by *Kristen Simon*, and co-plotted and kibitzed by me! New readers will be able to jump right in as the stories and milieu are all brand new and there will be lots of surprises for old readers as well. And, no, this time out, ShadowHawk does *not* break any backs!"

In! A second cover and more pages for ***Superman #215***, the final issue of the *Brian Azzarello-Jim Lee* twelve-part "For Tomorrow" arc. Lee and *Scott Williams* will supply the variant cover as well as illustrating the eight bonus pages that are being added to the book . The two covers will be offered in an equal ratio, so no one will have to scramble to acquire the "rare" variant. ***Superman #215*** is now scheduled for April 23rd release.

Out! *Geof Darrow's* ***Shaolin Cowboy #1***, which has sold out of its first printing; the book is going back to press for a second edition that will be released at the same time as ***Shaolin Cowboy #2***. The publisher reports that the book "has received more than double the book's initial orders through reorder." Darrow has prepared a new cover for the second printing.

In! *Dan Slott*, who has signed an exclusive with Marvel. Slott has built a rep as a writer of "funny books" like ***She-Hulk*** and the upcoming ***Avengers*** spinoff ***GLA***. "Dan puts the fun and funny back into 'funny books,'" *Joe Quesada*, Marvel Editor-in-Chief, said. "Heck, he even makes *me* laugh!"

Slott is already at work on an as-yet-unnamed project slated for summer release. ""This August, I'll be the writer on a new 'secret' monthly book for Marvel, starring one of their top-tier characters." So who is it? "I don't know if we can let the cat out of the bag just yet," Slott said.

Out! ***Lions, Tigers and Bears***, the all-ages fantasy series by *Mike Bullock & Jack Lawrence*, has sold out of its first issue. "I really wondered just how the book would be received when we first decided to do it. I mean, there really are no super heroes or super villains, no giant robots, no evil alien despots and the only real power in the book comes in the form of the imaginations of two children," Bullock said. "Thankfully, both retailers and fans embraced Joey and the Night Pride and we couldn't begin to thank them enough for their overwhelming support." The second issue should be on the stands at about the same time as this issue of ***CSN***.

In! *Steve Dillon*, who has signed on to illustrate ***Ultimate X-Men #58***, giving regular series artist *Stuart Immonen* a chance to stay on schedule. "Co-creator of Preacher and one of my absolute favorite artists ever, Steve has never drawn the X-Men before (I think?), and I'm sure he's the last artist many of you expected to see on a book like this," writer *Brian K. Vaughan* said. "But we all agreed that Steve was the only guy for this issue, a standalone bank heist story focusing on Professor Xavier and a 100% all-new mutant villain named Syndicate. I'm particularly proud of this script, and I hope that fans of ***Ex Machina*** and ***Y—The Last Man*** who've been reluctant to read a 'mainstream' book like ***Ultimate X-Men*** will give this issue a shot, if only to see Steve's insane design for our new baddie.

"Meanwhile, Mr. Immonen will be gearing up for what will likely be my last arc on the book as solo writer (#61-65), a huge story that will reintroduce Havok and Emma Frost to our pages, as well as some other old friends. This epic will tie together a lot of elements from Bendis and Millar's runs, as well as set up some of the spectacular stuff director *Bryan Singer* & Co. have planned for their upcoming yearlong extravaganza. I had a great meeting with Mr. ***Usual Suspects*** a few months ago, and I'll be sticking around for at least his first few issues, just helping to translate the incredibly cool ideas he and ***X2*** writers *Michael Dougherty* and *Dan Harris* have come up with into comic-book form."

Top Two-Dozen for April

Action Comics #826

Judd Winick (W)| Ian Churchill & Norm Rapmund (A)
(DC FEB050259 $2.50)

Adventures of Superman #639

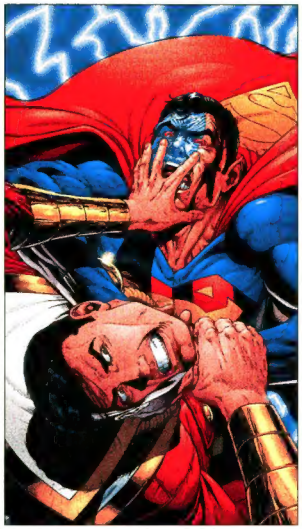
Judd Winick (W)| Ian Churchill & Norm Rapmund (A)
(DC FEB050260 $2.50)

Superman #216

Judd Winick (W)| Ian Churchill & Norm Rapmund (A)
(DC FEB050261 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
When an evil force takes an interest in Metropolis and its super-powered protector, the wizard Shazam sends in Captain Marvel to come to the Man of Steel's assistance before it's too late.

Why Should You Care?
A major three-part story arc... top notch creators... a team-up adventure starring Superman and Captain Marvel... what's *not* to like?



Batman: Jekyll and Hide #1

Paul Jenkins (W)| Jae Lee (A)
(DC FEB050247 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Batman's schizophrenic adversary is spotlighted in this six-issue limited series that explores the villain who does battle with two enemies—Batman and himself!

Why Should You Care?
Jenkins & Lee, usually associated with Marvel, make their DC team debut with here—and what a debut it is!

Billy the Kid's Old Time Oddities #1

Eric Powell (W)| Kyle Hotz (A)
(Dark Horse FEB050075 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Supposedly gunned down in his prime, Billy the Kid still lives... but this time, the young gun has escaped to the circus! Unfortunately for him, these sideshow performers have plans for Billy... plans that involve his skills with a gun. You see, they intend to use a European road trip as a cover to steal a priceless artifact from a mysterious scientist—a scientist named Victor Frankenstein...

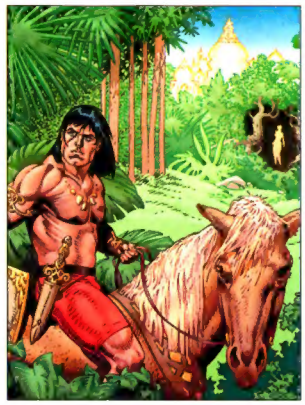
Why Should You Care?
Eric Powell, the creator responsible for the offbeat ***Goon***, takes an unpredictable sidetrip in this genre-crossing tale—and he's enlisted the all-too-rarely-seen *Kyle Hotz* to supply the visuals!

City of Tomorrow #1

Howard Chaykin (W/A)
(WildStorm/DC FEB050335 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Columbia was supposed to be the ideal community... but you remember what Robert Burns said about those best-laid plans, don't you? A computer virus has corrupted every one of Columbia's robotic employees, transforming into criminals and making the utopian island a nightmarish hell. But the son of the man who envisioned the idyllic Columbia isn't willing to let his father's dream die...

Why Should You Care?
A corrupt urban jungle... technology gone amok... a take-no-prisoners hero and his vigilante team... yep, *Howard Chaykin's* back in his element!



Conan & the Jewels of Gwahlur #1

P. Craig Russell (W/A)
(Dark Horse FEB050064 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
A young woman becomes involved in a scheme to impersonate a goddess in order to steal the jewels of Gwahlur... and is it any surprise that Conan is right in the middle of the scheming and thievery? This tale presents an older, more savvy Conan who uses his mind as well as his muscles to overcome his adversaries.

Why Should You Care?
P. Craig Russell, one of comics' finest fantasists, turns his attention to Robert E. Howard's indomitable hero in this memorable adaptation of one of Howard's most memorable tales.

Day of Vengeance #1

Bill Willingham (W)| Justiniano & Walden Wong (A)
(DC FEB050274 $2.50; also available in a signed edition (FEB052800 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?
The first of two ***DC Countdown***-spinoff limited series debuting this month, Day of Vengeance focuses on the mystical side of the DC Universe as Ragman and the Enchantress become unlikely allies in a war to save all things supernatural from destruction at the hands of the Spectre.

Why Should You Care?
Big things are happening in the DC Universe in 2005—and ***Day of Vengeance*** is an important part of those big things. One eighty-page mega-star oneshot leads into four vital miniseries (of which this is just one).. and wait 'til you see what's coming after that! Get on board this adventure from the beginning—you'll be glad you did!

Death Jr #1

Gary Whitta (W)| Ted Naifeh (A)
(Image FEB051571 $4.99)

What's the Scoop?
Talk about your killer school schedules!... DJ has it much worse than the typical middle school students, thanks to the fact that his father is the Grim Reaper himself... but there's a student clique for every outcast, even a dead one!

Why Should You Care?
Image ventures into Slave Labor's ever-successful black-clad-social-misfit territory with this offbeat, irreverently lighthearted look at middle school life... and death!

Green Lantern: Rebirth #6

Geoff Johns (W)| Ethan Van Sciver (A)
(DC JAN050302 $2.99)

Green Lantern Secret Files 2005

Geoff Johns & others (W)| Darwyn Cooke & others (A)
(DC FEB050279 $4.99; also available in a double-signed edition (FEB052801 $49.99))

What's the Scoop?
Hal Jordan's restoration to his rightful position as Earth's Green Lantern continues. But what's in store for Kyle Rayner, the current Green Lantern? Find out in the final issue of the landmark six-part series! Meanwhile, ***Green Lantern Secret Files*** follows Hal as he relives some of the most meaningful flights in his life, joined by an unexpected partner.

Why Should You Care?
Hal Jordan's redemption and return has been the biggest event in the DCU since ***Identity Crisis***—and the adventure is only beginning, since these books lead into next month's long-awaited ***Green Lantern #1!***

INVINCIBLE #0

Robert Kirkman (W)• Ryan Ottley & Bill Crabtree (A)
(Image FEB051572 50¢)

What's the Scoop?
Who is Mark Grayson? Who are his parents? What's his origin? What are his powers? The answers are all in this bargain-priced book that serves as a perfect introduction to Kirkman's teen hero, laying the groundwork for upcoming storylines.

Why Should You Care?
For newcomers, this is an inexpensive way to sample one of comics' most fascinating superhero series—and for established fans of ***Invincible***, it's a low-priced primer that offers a lot of hints of what's coming up. Talk about having something for everyone!...

IRON GHOST #1

Chuck Dixon (W)• Sergio Cariello (A)
(Image FEB051573 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
World War II is nearing its end, the Third Reich is on the breach of collapse... but someone isn't waiting for a war crimes tribunal to bring justice to the German officers and foot soldiers responsible for so much death and pain. He calls himself the Iron Ghost... and the Germans want to send this ghost to the afterlife before he can do the same to them!

Why Should You Care?
Chuck Dixon, the master of hard-edged adventure, adds a wartime twist to timeless themes of justice and vengeance.

JON SABLE, FREELANCE: BLOODLINE #1

Mike Grell (W/A)
(IDW FEB052909 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?
More than two decades after his comics debut, *Mike Grell's* freelance hero is back... but time hasn't been too kind to Jon Sable. No longer at the top of his game, Sable is trying to get his career back on track by taking on an assignment to prevent the assassination of a foreign national visiting Manhattan... but is he up to the job?

Why Should You Care?
After far too long a lapse, Grell returns to his signature character with a rarity—a comic book series that actually forces its protagonist to acknowledge the passage of time!

MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN #13

Reginald Hudlin (W)• Billy Tan (A)
(Marvel FEB051870 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Has Peter Parker's life turned around? It appears so—he has a great new pad, a phenomenal job, and financial security. But he also has a new enemy to deal with... and a rival who's interested in Mary Jane!

Why Should You Care?
Reginald Hudlin, the writer who made ***Black Panther*** a hit, turns his attention to Spider-Man as he brings a fresh new direction to this Marvel Knights title.

MNEMOVORE #1

Hans Rodionoff & Ray Fawkes (W)• Mike Huddleston (A)
(Vertigo/DC FEB050357 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
An Olympic hopeful finds that her life is turned upside down after a serious accident... but that's nowhere near as unnerving as the strange creature who's warping the minds of everyone close to her. It's up to Kaley to fight off this horrifying menace and save those closest to her... even though she can't remember them at all!

Why Should You Care?
This series, described as "***Invasion of the Body Snatchers*** for the ADD generation," is the sort of edgy horror that Vertigo built its reputation on.

MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

Brian Hill (W)• John Vogel & Walter McDaniel (A)
(Atomeka FEB052582 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?
The first original Mortal Kombat comic in years presents an original story that bridges the gap between Midway's ***Mortal Kombat: Alliance*** and ***Mortal Kombat: Deception***. And if that's not enough, there are oodles of pinups by *Mark Texeira, Alex Horley, Garry Leach, Steve Pugh, Keron Grant, Marat Mychaels, Ale Garza*, and others.

Why Should You Care?
Thanks to the comics preview included in the Brady Games' ***Mortal Kombat: Deception Strategy Guide***, this book's going to be on the radar for legions of game-players, many of whom are going to discover comic shops as a result. And that's *always* a good thing!...

NIL GN

James Turner (W/A)
(Amaze Ink FEB052509 $12.95)

What's the Scoop?
An alienated loner, forced to re-evaluate his life when he is falsely charged with murder, sets off on an odyssey of hope in this absurd graphic novel with nihilistic overtones.

Why Should You Care?
James Turner's bleak, satirical, and strangely moving graphic novel is an amazingly powerful work from a fresh new talent—the sort of blend of philosophy and graphic professionalism that companies like Fantagraphics once built their reputation on.

OMAC PROJECT #1

Greg Rucka (W)• Jesus Saiz (A)
(DC FEB050300 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
The second DC Countdown spinoff limited series explores the nature of heroism in the DC Universe. The mysterious mastermind who control the DCU's superspy organization Checkmate has created a One Man Army Corps in response to the growing metahuman presence on Earth... but the OMAC secret has attracted the attention of both the Dark Knight and an old ally...

Why Should You Care?
The refocus of the DC Universe continues in this series that gives the OMAC concept a contemporary urgency.

POWER PACK #1

Marc Sumerak (W)• Gurihiru (A)
(Marvel FEB051874 $2.99; also available in a signed edition (FEB052811 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?
The super-powered siblings return in a new family-friendly book As the series begins, Katie Power is ready to reveal her secret super-identity to the world... unless her siblings can stop her! And where there's a Power Pack, you know there *have* to be Snarks!...

Why Should You Care?
If the return of the Power Pack isn't enough all-ages fun for you, there's also a Franklin Richards backup story in each issue!

RED SONJA #0

Mike Carey & Michael Avon Oeming (W)• Mel Rubi (A)
(Dynamite FEB052705 25¢; also available in a foil-covered edition (FEB052777 $10.00))

What's the Scoop?
Conan's female counterpart is back in action in the super-affordable kickoff issue of Dynamite's ongoing series.

Why Should You Care?
The price may be two bits, but the story and art are definitely top-dollar stuff!

SEVEN SOLDIERS: KLARION THE WITCH BOY #1

Grant Morrison (W)• Frazer Irving (A)
(DC FEB050304 $2.99)

SEVEN SOLDIERS: ZATANNA #1

Grant Morrison (W)• Ryan Sook & Mick Gray (A)
(DC FEB050305 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Grant Morrison's epic thirty-part saga continues with the addition of two more limited series. ***Klarion*** offers an all-new take on the character, starring a non-conformist rebel who refuses to go along with the brutal lawgivers and their familiars who maintain rigid order in their subterranean society. In ***Zatanna***, the mystical heroine must come to terms with the fact that her magical powers are waning, and only the secrets contained in her father's lost magical journals hold any hope of reversing the situation.

Why Should You Care?
Grant Morrison continues to renovate and reinvent some of the DCU's second-tier heroes with intriguing, sometimes radical reinterpretations. Most creators spend a lifetime developing the dozens of concepts that Morrison is packing into the most ambitious superhero project of his career.

SPIDER-MAN: BREAKOUT #1

TONY BEDARD (W)/ MANUEL GARCIA (A)
(Marvel FEB051884 $2.99)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
What does Spidey do when a flood of super-villain escapees threatens New York City? Find out in this ***New Avengers*** spinoff!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
New Avengers has given you the inside look at the team response to the potential threat of the biggest jailbreak in Marvel Universe history—but this book gives you a ground-level look at one hero's response in a tale that complements the first ***New Avengers*** arc.. Sometimes the little picture is every bit as important as the big picture...

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH #1

(Dark Horse FEB050047 $2.99)

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH #2

(Dark Horse FEB050048 $2.99)

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH #3

(Dark Horse FEB050049 $2.99)

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH #4

(Dark Horse FEB050050 $2.99)

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH TP

(Dark Horse JAN050044 $12.95)

MILES LANE (W)/ DOUG WHEATLEY & CHRIS CHUCKRY (A)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
The Clone Wars saga comes to a dramatic conclusion this spring with the debut of the long-awaited third (or sixth, depending on how you count it) ***Star Wars*** film—and Dark Horse brings you the full story in comic book or trade paperback... the choice is yours!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Don't want to wait until May 19th to find out what happens? Thanks to Dark Horse, you don't have to!

SUPERMAN BATMAN #19

JEPH LOEB (W)/ IAN CHURCHILL & NORM RAPMUND (A)
(DC JAN050284 $2.99; also available in a remarked edition (JAN052732 $69.99) and a signed edition (JAN052731 $49.99))

SUPERMAN BATMAN #20

JEPH LOEB (W)/ ED MCGUINNESS & DEXTER VINES (A)
(DC FEB050262 $2.99; also available in a double-signed edition (FEB052802 $49.99))

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
What's Supergirl been up to since ***Superman/Batman #13?*** Find out in a special standalone issue! Then Loeb, McGuinness, and Vines—the team that kicked off ***Superman/Batman*** back in 2003—reunite for Loeb's final story arc, pitting the Man of Steel and the Dark Knight against a super-team that suspects the duo of murdering one of their own.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
The story arc that introduced Supergirl was one of the biggest events of 2004, and this comic bridges the gap between that best-selling arc and the upcoming ***Supergirl*** series slated to debut later this year. Follow that up with the kickoff issue of the six-part story that introduces a new government-sponsored superteam into the DCU, and you see why ***Superman/Batman*** continues to sizzle.

WONDER WOMAN #215

GREG RUCKA (W)/ RAGS MORALES & MICHAEL BAIR (A)
(DC FEB050308 $2.25)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Wonder Woman ventures to the land of the dead looking for something believed lost to the Olympian gods forever... and the first clues about the ultimate fate of Donna Troy are revealed.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Taking on their first series after the completion of ***Identity Crisis,*** *Rags Morales & Michael Bair* sign on as ***Wonder Woman*** artists beginning with this issue.

ZOMBIE KING

FRANK CHO (W/A)
(Image FEB051575 $2.95)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
A pharmaceutical company develops a miracle drug that can mend bones, reconnect nerves, and even reanimate dead cells. Think that's a good thing? Well, take a look at the title of this comic and you'll begin to understand the downside of miracles...

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Frank Cho, best known for his human interest/humor strip ***Liberty Meadows*** and the sexy ***Shanna the She-Devil,*** unleashes his darker side in this splatterpunk horror tale.

CHECK 'EM OUT: BOOKS YOU SHOULD BE READING

ACTION PHILOSOPHERS #1

(Evil Twin FEB052827 $2.95)

Think that philosophy is dull? Well, that's 'cause you haven't seen the ***Action Philosophers*** doing their thing! Friedrich Nietzsche: The Original Ubermensch! Plato: Wrestling Superstar of Ancient Greece! Bodhidharma: Grandmaster of Kung-Fu! Their philosophies have some punch to them, as this irreverently informative comic reveals.

BEOWULF #1

(Speakeasy FEB053041 $2.99)

The Anglo-Saxon epic hero is still around in modern-day Manhattan, going about his everyday life under the simplified name of Wulf. He's a Grendel-slaying warrior no longer... but that doesn't mean he's put his hero days behind him. When super-heroes start popping up all over the world, Beowulf realizes that it's a manifestation of something far more malevolent. This new series by *Brian Augustyn & Dub* offers a 21st Century take on the venerable epic hero that should be well received by fans of similarly-modernized classic heroes like Thor and Hercules.

FLY CHRONICLES: LIFE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FOOD CHAIN TP

(Active Images FEB052447 $12.95)

Michael Blaney offers an unpredictable, wry look at the life of those world-famous pests in this series that lets you see the world through the multi-faceted eyes of an ordinary housefly and his family.

PAKKIN'S LAND VOL 2 #1

(Alias FEB052491 $2.99)

Gary Shipman's all-ages fantasy saga is back at last—and it's in color for the first time! If you enjoyed the epic feel of such all-ages classics as ***Bone*** and ***Abadazad,*** you're going to love ***Pakkin's Land.***

SOLO #4

(DC FEB050303 $4.99)

Just in time to coincide with the debut of his series ***City of Tomorrow*** (spotlighted in this issue's Hot Picks), *Howard Chaykin* lets his creative energies flow free in this collection of six diverse tales, ranging from Westerns to SF to autobiography.

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #27

(Marvel FEB051885 $2.99)

Paul Jenkins says farewell to Spidey with this issue—and rather than trying to follow up Jenkins' distinctive storytelling with the work of another writer, Marvel is retiring ***Spec Spidey*** as a tribute to Jenkins' accomplishments.

HOT COMMODITIES: APRIL'S HOTTEST MERCHANDISING•COLLECTIBLES

BATMAN BEGINS: CHRISTIAN BALE AS BATMAN STATUE

(DC Direct MAR050353 $195.00)

DC Direct's first licensed statue based on the upcoming Warner Bros film—and since it's from DC Direct, you know it's going to be a high-quality product deserving of a place in your collection.

BATMAN FAMILY COLLECTORS' PLATE

(DC Direct OCT040390 $59.95)

The latest Alex Ross illustrated collector's plate features Batman, Dick Grayson as Robin, and Barbara Gordon as Batgirl.

MARTIAN MANHUNTER STATUE

(DC Direct OCT040389 $195.00)

Alex Ross did the design work and *Mike Hill* did the sculpting on this limited edition statue. If you remember how quickly the Martian Manhunter Maquette sold out a couple of years back, you'll know why we recommend that J'Onn J'Onzz fans grab this one while they can!

STAR WARS: CRIMSON EMPIRE BOOK & BUST-UP FIGURE SET

(Dark Horse FEB050051 $24.99)

Okay, you may have the collected edition already—but the two exclusive Bust-Ups include a PVC minibust of Darth Sidious in translucent "holographic blue." Grab it at list price, because it'll most likely be selling for more than the price of the book in a few months!

COLLECTED COOL: APRIL'S BEST REPRINT VOLUMES

BATMAN: THE GREATEST BATMAN STORIES EVER TOLD

(DC FEB050257 $19.99)

Featuring classic material by *Bill Finger, Dennis O'Neil, Bob Kane, Neal Adams, Frank Miller,* and others, this book offers a great overview of the Dark Knight's finest adventures in a collection that spans sixty-five years of Bat-action.

BATMAN: YEAR ONE DELUXE EDITION HC

(DC JAN050276 $19.99)

The classic *Frank Miller-David Mazzuchelli* tale is supplemented with a heaping helping of bonus materials, including unseen art, script pages, background material, color samples, and more.

COMPLETE PEANUTS VOL 3: 1955-1956 HC

(Fantagraphics FEB052834 $28.95)

Third volume in Fantagraphics' comprehensive reprinting of every ***Peanuts*** strip *Charles Schulz* ever produced.

FIRST KINGDOM VOL 1 TP (OF 4)

(Mecca FEB052964 $17.95)

The long-out-of-print *Jack Katz* fantasy classic was one of the pioneering efforts of the independent publishing movement; now it's returning in the first of four volumes that collects the entire tale, adding never-before-seen sketch material and other goodies.

IDENTITY CRISIS FINAL PRINTING #1
(DC FEB050286 $3.99)

IDENTITY CRISIS FINAL PRINTING #2
(DC FEB050287 $3.99)

IDENTITY CRISIS FINAL PRINTING #3
(DC FEB050288 $3.99)

IDENTITY CRISIS FINAL PRINTING #4
(DC FEB050289 $3.99)

IDENTITY CRISIS FINAL PRINTING #5
(DC FEB050290 $3.99)

IDENTITY CRISIS FINAL PRINTING #6
(DC FEB050291 $3.99)

IDENTITY CRISIS FINAL PRINTING #7
(DC FEB050292 $3.99)

The best-selling series of 2004 comes back into print in an unprecedented final printing of all seven issues.

MARVEL VISIONARIES: STEVE DITKO HC
(Marvel FEB051943 $29.99)

One of the most distinctive talents of the Silver Age is spotlighted in this collection that reprints classic Ditko work from his prehero Marvel days all the way through to his 80s work.

RISING STARS HC
(Image FEB051648 $69.99)

RISING STARS HC SLIPCASE EDITION
(Image FEB051649 $99.99)

The entire twenty-four issue *J. Michael Straczynski* saga that foreshadowed his work on ***Supreme Power*** is collected in a whopping 692-page hardcover.

VERTIGO: FIRST TASTE TP
(Vertigo/DC FEB050361 $4.99)

Six premiere issues are collected in this bargain-priced book that lets you sample ***Y—The Last Man, 100 Bullets, Books of Magick: Life During Wartime, Swamp Thing, Transmetropolitan,*** and ***Death: The High Cost of Living*** for less than a buck a book!

READ ALL ABOUT IT: MUST-HAVE ADDITIONS TO YOUR REFERENCE LIBRARY

COMIC BOOK ARTIST COLLECTION VOL 3
(TwoMorrows FEB053098 $24.95)

Collects early issues of ***CBA,*** with over two dozen pages of previously-unseen material.

DAVE SIM: COLLECTED LETTERS 2004 TP
(Aardvark-Vanaheim FEB052434 $30.00)

Featuring the letters Sim has received since ***Cerebus #300***.

EISNER•MILLER TP
(Dark Horse JAN050056 $19.95)

Featuring conversations between *Frank Miller* and the late *Will Eisner* regarding the art form; this volume will present some of Eisner's final ruminations on the field that he helped to shape..

OVERSTREET COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE VOL 35
(Gemstone DEC042648-51 32.00/$25.00)

This year's essential pricing reference comes with a choice of two covers: a stunning recreation of *Tales of Suspense #39* by *John K. Snyder III* and a fond remembrance of ***Little Lulu*** by the beloved, late Lulu artist *John Stanley*; available in both trade paperback and hardcover. After more than third of a century, the ***Overstreet Guide*** remains the bible of the comics collecting field.

RGK: ART OF ROY G KRENKEL DELUXE HC
(Vanguard FEB053103 $49.95)

RGK: ART OF ROY G KRENKEL PB
(Vanguard FEB053102 $34.95)

Spotlighting the art of one of the fantasy field's finest illustrators, the man who helped to shape the work of *Frank Frazetta*, among others.

Michael Turner's Fathom Prelude #1

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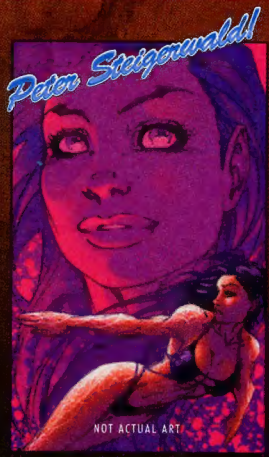

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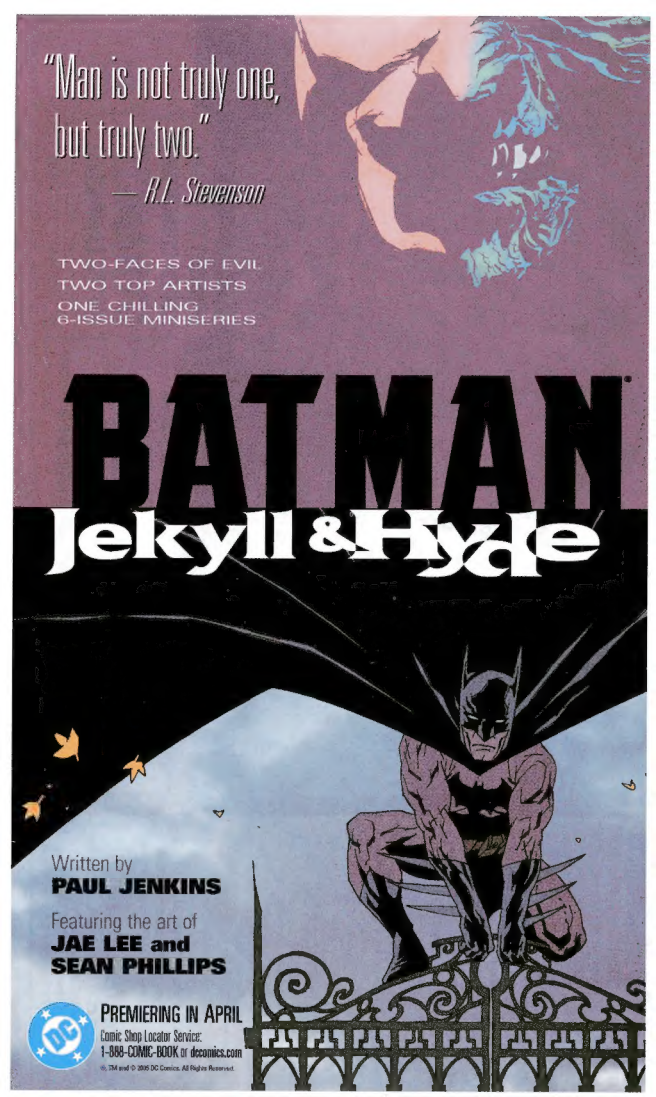
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